

Spring 5-10-2012

Preparation and Performance of William Bolcom's Cabaret Songs

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The University of Southern Mississippi

Preparation and Performance of
William Bolcom's Cabaret Songs

by

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A Thesis
Submitted to the Honors College of
The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Bachelor of Music
in the School of Music

May 2012

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The *Cabaret Songs Complete* by William Bolcom and Arnold Weinstein are true gems amongst the vast genre of twentieth century American art song. These songs are particularly unique because they meld the world of classical singing with modern styles, such as jazz, pop, and blues, as only William Bolcom can do. The songs are musically and dramatically challenging, making them less common in the traditional college student repertoire. Studying and performing these pieces has been a challenging and rewarding experience for me.

The purpose of this thesis is to provide a resource for the preparation of a cabaret show, specifically featuring these songs. This process includes musical and textual study, style choices, and dramatic development. These elements will be presented through discussion of methods and the final performance. A total of sixteen songs will be used in this thesis (listed in the order they appear in the cabaret volumes; the performance order is included in Chapter 2 of the thesis):

VOLUME ONE

- OVER THE PIANO
- WAITIN
- SONG OF BLACK MAX (AS TOLD BY THE DE KOONING BOYS)
- AMOR

VOLUME TWO

- PLACES TO LIVE
- TOOTHBRUSH TIME

- THE ACTOR
- OH CLOSE THE CURTAIN
- GEORGE

VOLUME THREE

- LOVE IN THE THIRTIES
- MIRACLE SONG
- SATISFACTION

VOLUME FOUR

- CAN'T SLEEP
- AT THE LAST LOUSY MOMENTS OF LOVE
- LADY LUCK
- BLUE

I will provide the texts of these pieces along with my original script for the show. My dialogue is included to show the context of the poems within my show. A few musical examples showing different styles and techniques that appear throughout the music will be given in order to give the reader an idea of what to look for in the scores; though, an entire harmonic and stylistic analysis of each piece will not be given. This, in combination with a summary of preparation and the final performance, and a copy of the scores with staging notes, will provide insight into the performance process.

HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Cabaret

Providing a thorough history of cabaret would move this paper beyond its' scope. Though it is a shame not to discuss the incredibly detailed and interesting history of the art, for the purpose of this paper, the focus will be on a very brief historical outline.

Cabaret can be said to have its roots in Paris in the late 19th century. Located in the Montmartre district of Paris, *Le Chat Noir* is considered to be the first cabaret opened by Rodolphe Salis. This venue began as a means for the Hydropathes Society to meet and perform for one another. This literary society was a group of artists and friends of Salis. From this point forward, cabaret was characterized by two elements: "a testing ground for young artists... or as the satirical stage of contemporaneity" (Appignanesi, p.12). This is the nature of cabaret: "a performance which can span the intellectual, the artistic and the popular, while providing a vehicle for living satire" (Appignanesi, p. 13).

Following the success of *Le Chat Noir* in Paris (frequented by such artists as Satie, Debussy, and Maupassant), cabarets sprung up all over Paris. By 1900 cabarets had migrated to other areas of France as well as Germany. By the time World War I finished, the informal yet intimate art of cabaret had invaded Berlin, Munich, Vienna, and even Moscow. In the midst and aftermath of war, cabaret served as an outlet for both the creative and the public to enjoy. In Germany, a weekly magazine called *Simplicissimus* fueled the fire of cabaret, attacking "the makers, purveyors and accepters of authority, literary kitsch and hypocritical morality" (Appignanesi, p. 31). A cabaret of the same name, often abbreviated to *Simpl'*, was born around this time. An excerpt from an issue

of the magazine is shown below in order to suggest an idea of how cabaret was perceived during this era:

1. Come, if possible, late, so that the guests already there know that you *do* have something else to do.
2. Give your coat to the woman in the Cloakroom. You're a friendly man and your coat is new.
3. Sit down haphazardly and noisily. Then change your seat often until you find one with the right shape.
4. Read the menu and wine list loudly and emphatically to your companion. Learn it if possible off by heart, and then order a portion of "later."
5. When everything concerning your material welfare has been looked after, take part – even if at first only willingly – in the artistic presentation. Look upon the conférencier with contempt right from the start. He's an ass and because of that, let him feel your spiritual superiority.
6. Time your noisy interjections so that they erupt precisely where they don't fit. This contributes enormously to enlivening the programme.
7. If you're a woman, then criticize the dress of the performing artiste boldly and with wit. (Don't forget your lorgnette as a prop for this.)
8. During song presentations, aim your cigarette smoke casually toward the podium. The singer will inhale it willingly. It makes his voice soft and supple.
9. During acts, use your cutlery and glasses in an unbothered fashion. Their sound does one good and replaces the band.
10. When you have been bored long enough by the programme and have gotten angry over the bill, leave as noisily as you came in with the consciousness of having spent a most enjoyable evening.

(from *Simplicissimus-Künstlerkneipe*, ed. René Prévot, Appignanesi, p. 55)

Cabaret made its way to America in the form of ragtime. When slavery was abolished, many blacks found their only source of employment to be through musical entertainment in clubs and brothels. Social issues in America during the 1920s and 1930s resulted in further changes in entertainment. Speakeasies grew out of the depression and prohibition, providing illegal alcohol while entertaining the masses with the same satire and parody that cabaret was born from. Various other musical styles and entertainment venues developed from cabaret, including musical theatre, jazz, big bands, and then film and television.

William Bolcom

William Bolcom is a twentieth century American composer from Seattle, Washington. Born on May 26, 1938, he began his piano and composition studies at the young age of eleven. Bolcom completed his Master of Arts at Mills College and his D.M.A. at Stanford University. He studied under such musicians of note as Leland Smith, Darius Milhaud, and Olivier Messiaen (the latter two while at the Paris Conservatoire). Bolcom held a faculty position at the University of Michigan School of Music for thirty-five years before retiring in 2008.

Bolcom has and continues to compose in a variety of genre including opera, choral, vocal, chamber, orchestral, and cabaret. A few examples within these categories include his three operas (*A View from the Bridge*, *A Wedding*, and *McTeague*), four violin sonatas, eleven string quartets, two film scores, and four volumes of cabaret songs. Bolcom has been the recipient of many awards and honors including, but not limited to, The Pulitzer Prize for Music (1988), National Medal of Arts (given by the President of

the United States in 2006), four Grammys for the recording of his *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, and an induction into the American Classical Music Hall of Fame (2010). He has been commissioned by many prestigious orchestras, such as the New York Philharmonic, and some of his stage works have been presented at major opera houses, such as the Metropolitan Opera.

Arnold Weinstein

Arnold Weinstein was a playwright and writer of the twentieth century. Born in New York City on June 10, 1927, Weinstein spent his youth in New York City experiencing the street life and plethora of languages. During World War II, he served in the United States Navy, eventually enrolling at Hunter College on the GI Bill. His love of languages was evident, and Weinstein continued on to Harvard where he received a Classics degree, a Rhodes scholarship, and two Fulbright grants. Before his death in 2005, Weinstein served as chair of the Yale Drama School Playwriting Department as well as professor of poetry and dramatic writing at Columbia University.

While spending some time in Italy, Weinstein was commissioned by Darius Milhaud to write a libretto to be set to music. This was his first experience writing for composers. Milhaud was dissatisfied with Weinstein's writing and gave the libretto to his pupil, William Bolcom. This first project together became the off-Broadway smash *Dynamite Tonight*. This marked the beginning of Weinstein and Bolcom's musical partnership which would last over forty-five years. Together they created three operas, a book of madrigals, an orchestral song cycle, and various other songs, including the four volumes of cabaret songs. Though his collaboration with Bolcom is perhaps his greatest

accomplishment, Weinstein also wrote plays and poetry, in addition to lyrics for various other composers, including Philip Glass.

CHAPTER TWO

LYRICS

Arnold Weinstein's lyrics to the cabaret songs are quirky and enjoyable. He creates realistic characters with vivid imagery through relatively simple language. His references to classical music can be found in such songs as *Miracle Song* and *George*, cleverly hidden within the poem and complemented by Bolcom's music. These poems are entertaining yet deceptively complex in their content. When studying them, one constantly discovers something new, whether a popular reference or a new idea about approaching a phrase. The lyrics are included in this chapter with the dialogue (in italicized quotations) that connected them in my final cabaret show. William Bolcom discusses Weinstein's intent with his lyrics in the *Notes to the Complete Edition* found in the *Cabaret Songs Complete*. This foreword helped to give me some idea on how to approach the songs, though for the purpose of continuity within my cabaret show, some of the songs were taken slightly out of context, as is the right of any performer.

Script: Song Lyrics with Dialogue

Places to Live

Places to live! Give me places to live!

Wonders to wander to, places to live!

My feet are dreaming of new dust, new dirt;

My hips want to swing in a cellophane skirt.

Give me my change in a celluloid note while I buy wooden hats from the factory boat.

Places to live! Give me places to live!

Wonders to wander to places to live!

My tonsils are longing to hum a new tune;

I'm dying to dance by the dark of the moon with mustachioed mounties in deep purple kilts and me in blue velvet on flaming red stilts.

Places to live! Give me places to live!

Give me wonders to wander to places to live!

My soul is keening for new forms of faith!

I need a new God more than Henry the Eighth to take off my feathers and give me release, and I'll kneel in the sand and I'll drown my valise.

Places to live! Give me places to live.

"The worst part about traveling? Unpacking. Sometimes it just seems easier to throw everything away and buy new clothes. Then I remember...I'm a singer. And I can barely afford the detergent. I just got back from an audition out of town. Same old, same old--- too many sopranos and not enough ear plugs. Now the agonizing waiting game begins. I swear if actors got paid for waiting (and more often than not being told NO)...we could all retire."

Waitin

Waitin waitin

I've been waitin waitin waitin all my life.

That light keeps on hiding from me, but it someday just might bless my sight.

Waitin waitin waitin

“I like seeing new cities though, it’s a nice change. You never know who or what you might see, which is exciting...or disturbing.”

Song of Black Max (As Told by the de Kooning Boys)

He was always dressed in black, long black jacket, broad black hat, sometimes a cape, and as thin, and as thin as rubber tape: Black Max

He would raise that big black hat to the big shots of the town who raised their hats right back, never knew they were bowing to Black Max.

I’m talking about night in Rotterdam when the right night people of all the town would find what they could in the night neighborhood of Black Max.

There were women in the windows with bodies for sale dressed in curls like little girls in little dollhouse jails.

When the women walked the street with the beds upon their backs, who was lifting up his brim to them? Black Max!

And there were looks for sale, the art of the smile, only certain people walked that mystery mile: artists, charlatans, vaudevillians, men of mathematics, acrobatics and civilians.

There was knitting needle music from a lady organgrinder with all her sons her, Marco, Vito, Benno (was he strong! Though he walked like a woman) and Carlo, who was five.

He must still be alive!

Ah poor Marco had the syph, and if you didn't take the terrible cure those days you went crazy and died and he did.

And at the coffin before they closed the lid, who raised *his* lid? Black Max.

I was climbing on the train one day going far away to the good old U.S.A. when I heard some music underneath the tracks.

Standing there beneath the bridge, long black jacket, broad black hat, playing the harmonica, one hand free to lift that hat to me: Black Max, Black Max, Black Max.

"I narrowly escaped Black Max that time...my mother always said I led a charmed life."

Lady Luck

What do you like most about yourself?

What do I like about myself most?

Well, I hate to boast, but I must say I like my luck!

Whenever they told me Scram!

I'd never slink out slow like a hack to the back no!

I'd let the door slam! And lo! And shazam!

Friendship would suddenly show up, like a telegram.

“Yeah...a telegram covered in glitter that sang Liza Minelli when you opened it. Why is it that drag queens always gravitate towards singers? For every singer, there is a man in drag. It’s practically Newton’s law. Speaking of, I had this ridiculously fun friend once. He used to throw the craziest parties. My friend George used to say...”

George

“Oh call me Georgia, hon, *Get yourself a drink,*” and sang the best soprano in our part of town.

In beads, brocade and pins, he sang if you happened in through the door he never locked and said, “Get yourself a drink,” and sang out loud till tears fell in the cognac and the choc’late milk and gin and on the beads, brocade and pins.

When strangers happened through his open door, George said, “Stay, but you gotta keep quiet while I sing and then a minute after. And call me Georgia.”

One fine day a stranger in a suit of navy blue took George’s life with a knife George had placed beside an apple pie he’d baked and stabbed him in the middle of *Un bel di vedremo* as he sang for this particular stranger who was in the United States Navy.

The funeral was at the cocktail hour.

We knew George would like it like that.

Tears fell on the beads, brocade and pins in the coffin which was white because George was a virgin.

Oh call him Georgia, hon, get yourself a drink.

“You can call me Georgia, hon get yourself a drink!”

“Now THAT sounds like an excellent idea. Oh George, he was the Will to my Grace...or perhaps the Jack to my Karen. To George-I’ll miss you constantly borrowing my stilettos. George had somewhat of a fascination with military men. It’s really a miracle he lived as long as he did.”

Miracle Song

This is a miracle not the miracle of birth but the miracle of death neglecting to remind us
the yonder, the nearby yonder

So many deaths come across the desk fret and weep weep and fret and yet forget

Death in the paper death on the phone death across a crowded closet death on the street
every third friend you meet: “Hello, so what else is dead?”

My idea of a miracle is not getting into it, death

Obituaries lapped up with the morning coffee Death in the evening song.

Game show death! And the question “why wuz you born?”

We wuz born to die! Right again!

And ev’ry breath a pact with death, ha!

A miracle! A fact. The news of the day.

“You know, it’s really not that big of a deal, death. I do it all the time...onstage.”

The Actor

A man I know to keep alive dies for a living.

To survive! To keep alive dies for a living.

Stands upon a stage each night matinees from two to five to keep the show alive, to keep the show alive, dies for a living.

I've taken the position do or die! Not to survive for nor keep alive for not to die for a living.

"Which is not exactly true. I would love to die for a living...maybe just a little death. A little death never hurt anyone. Oh no, it certainly did not..."

Satisfaction

When you look for something grand and ample

Take a bee for a sample:

Sits a second on a rose sips a bit and goes.

Satisfaction after all can be sweet and small.

"That reminds me of a guy I dated once."

Toothbrush Time

It's toothbrush time, ten a.m. again and toothbrush time.

Last night at half past nine it seemed O.K.

But in the light of day not so fine at tooth brush time

Now he's crashing round my bathroom

Now he's reading my degree, perusing all my pills reviewing all my ills and he comes out smelling like me

Now he advances on my kitchen, now he raids ev'ry shelf till from the pots and pans and puddles and debris emerges three eggs all for himself.

Oh, how I'd be ahead if I'd stood out of bed;

I wouldn't sit here grieving, waiting for the wonderful moment of his leaving at toothbrush time, toothbrush time, ten a.m. again and toothbrush time.

I know it's sad to be alone it's so bad to be alone, still I should've known that I'd be glad to be alone.

I should've known, I should've known!

Never should've picked up the phone and called him.

Hey—uh, listen, uhm, uh I've got to, uh,---oh you gotta go too? So glad you understand.

And-----by the way, did you say nine tonight again?

See you then. Toothbrush time!

“After a string of guys like that, I decided I needed to find myself a REAL man...which I did...there was just one little problem...real men come with...baggage.”

Love in the Thirties

Dad, can we live in the elevator building?

Kid, with our luck we'd live on the ground floor.

Dad, why aren't we communists?

Kid, we can't afford it.

Dad, I saw the devil on the fire escape, long pointed pussy ears.

What kind of devil is that, kid? No tail, no horns.

Crawl into bed with your mother and me.

Dad, is there a heaven?

Heaven there is, kid, and it's right here. People in heaven are dying to get into this place!

Dad, what is a death wish?

I hear this death wish, death wish, and I wish I was dead!

Dad, who am I?

That's a good question, kid, we'll let you know, you'll see

Dad, how will I see?

You'll see "by the light of your silvery heart."

I'm talking science now, kid.

Dad, what is the soul?

Sort of a sigh with a wink in it, something like that. Oh, what the hell.

Gee, Dad, you know ev'rything.

Dad, will I always find you?

Kid, behind the label, under the table you'll find me and I'll find you and I'm still talking science, BOOP BOOP A DOO!

Dad?

Kid, now close your eyes and you will see all right behind your sight a light the size of a poppyseed on a Danish to go. Now let's put out that light and go to sleep.

“You know people should really mention their spawn...I mean, children...on the first date. Needless to say it wasn't long before that ended. I felt bad for dumping the guy, but seriously...do I look like mommy material to you? As far as romantic misdemeanors go, I really can't complain about that guy... or any of the others for that matter. My friend however; now she was a victim of far worse crimes of the heart.”

Can't Sleep

Can't sleep dreaming of you dreaming of me turning to you woken by me.

Hush now, don't cry

All I was doing was dreaming.

At the Last Lousy Moments of Love

At the last lousy moments of love he wanted to tell me the truth.

At the last writhing rotten moments of love he wanted to tell me the truth—about me of course.

Thanks, I'll need this.

At the last lousy moments of love, he wanted to tell me that I wasn't doing to well.

I was eating and drinking and talking too much.

He wanted to tell me as a friend at the end of those last lousy moments of love.

He wanted to tell me he was leaving, he'd waited too long to tell me that I was self righteous even when I wasn't wrong, and I spoke about friendship, 'till our friends gave me up as a friend for the season, for which reason he wanted to tell me this truth.

He wanted to tell me these things, as a friend, he wanted to tell me, but he didn't in the end.

At those last lousy moments of love

He said it all, with his body to my best friend.

“Just to clarify, I was not the best friend in that situation. I was however the best friend that helped to vandalize his car and max out his credit card. You know, I always had this aspiration, someone I always wanted to be, but I was lacking some very important things. So I had to be content with an alternate model. Sometimes I like to pretend I am Bernadette Peters, singing in a smoky jazz club, crooning my soul. One night I even pretended to be Renee Fleming.”

Blue

This is what I want to do my heart is sit real still with you.

After all that cruising in around and out of town, put them down who dared refuse me

And the same old line I threw ah but up up up I grew

And now all I want to do my heart is sit real still with you.

After all that screeching talking fast and slowing down only now and then to reach you

When you'd let me know I knew that what I preach is none too true

That's why all I want to do my heart is sit real still with you.

(cause I do know this about people and I DON'T mean some : awf'ly smart people are often awful dumb! Aren't we? We just don't realize that behind the eyes, behind the mind you find the sweetest brilliance and stillness of such blue that--)

That's why all I want to do my soul is sit real still with you.

Ah so sweetly down the hill

That is what I want to do sweet soul is sit real still with you.

"Of course being a great diva requires going to all the best parties...all the best clothes...all the best jewels..."

Oh Close the Curtain

Oh close the curtain I can't stand the skies.

Am I uncertain or is this a room full of sighs?

What a wonderful party, never heard such lies!

And oh I want so to be in with these guys.

And there is more booze than you could refuse, more domestics padding around than you could ever lose, but no one could find my mind, my heart or my shoes.

So slip in to the bathroom and blow out your blues.

Two pacifist brothers are having a fight. A wife's getting loose 'cause her husband is tight.

Hear marriages breaking all over the night.

And the host and the hostess took flight.

Oh don't close the curtain I must see the skies.

My heart is hurtin this room full of sighs.

What a terrible party they ran out of lies.

And oh I want so to be gone from these guys.

Prince Charming moves in as you crush a yawn.

Will you make it? Will you muck it? (oh fuck it!) He's gone.

So I open the window to stare down the dawn.

The little blue gardner smiles at me from the lawn.

"And you meet the BEST MEN at parties!"

Over the Piano

He sang songs to her over the piano.

Sang long songs to her over the piano.

Low slow songs lusty songs of love.

Loving songs of long lust just to her just for her over the piano.

Until at last at half past four Everybody out the door!

She asked him please play me one more.

Which he did and as he did slid off the bench and said to her over the piano

Goodbye.

*ENCORE***Amor**

It wasn't the policeman's fault, in all the traffic roar.

Instead of shouting halt when he saw me,

He shouted Amor Amor Amor Amor.

Even the ice cream man (free ice creams by the score)

Instead of shouting Butter Pecan one look at me

He shouted Amor Amor Amor

All over town it went that way

Ev'rybody took off the day

Even philosophers understood how good was the good

'cuz I looked so good!

The poor stopped taking less

The rich stopped needing more.

Instead of shouting no and yes both looking at me shouted Amor

Da de da (scat)

My stay in town was cut short

I was dragged to court.

The judge said I disturbed the peace and the jury gave him what for!

The judge raised his hand and instead of Desist and Cease

Judgie came to the stand took my hand

And whispered Amor Amor Amor Amor

Night was turning into day I walked alone away.

Never see that town again.

But as I passed the church house door instead of singing Amen

The choir was singing Amor

Da da (scat) Amor Amor Amor Amor

CHAPTER THREE

MUSIC AND EXAMPLES

William Bolcom's music offers a variety of styles and techniques within his cabaret volumes. Within these pieces, one can dabble in jazz, pop, ragtime, and blues styles, to name a few. When studying these pieces, one has the artistic liberty to decide where to increase and decrease the tempo, utilize character voices, and make stylistic choices, such as scooping or straight tone. In this chapter I have listed several examples of different musical elements found within the various pieces. The first is Bolcom's use of preludes, interludes, and postludes to set the mood. In addition to this, he gives explicit tempo markings that break from the traditional norm, such as "Adagio" or "Allegro". Seen below is an example from *Over the Piano*. This excerpt illustrates Bolcom's use of an introduction and unconventional tempo marking to set the mood of the piece—an easy, mildly drunken, late night in a piano bar.

Swoopy, with rubato: sentimental waltz-tempo

4

The next example is of a standard twentieth century vocal technique utilized throughout the cabaret songs. This is a spoken type of speech production. “Different from ordinary speech only in that the voice inflections (usually only high, medium, and low) and/or rhythms are notated. (There are no precise pitch specifications.)” (Stone, p. 298) The excerpt below is from *Song of Black Max*.

The image displays two systems of a musical score. The first system, starting at measure 60, is labeled 'spoken' and '(freely)'. The vocal line contains the lyrics: 'Mar-co, Vi-to, Ben-no (Was he strong! though he walked like a woman)'. The piano accompaniment features a complex harmonic structure with many accidentals and a 'dim.' (diminuendo) marking. The second system, starting at measure 63, is labeled 'loud whisper' and '(in time)'. The vocal line contains the lyrics: 'and Car-lo, who was five. He must be still a-live!'. The piano accompaniment includes triplets and a 'pp' (pianissimo) marking.

A second vocal technique that can be found in these songs is scat singing. Scat singing is defined as “a technique of jazz singing in which onomatopoeic or nonsense syllables are sung to improvised melodies.” (Oxford Music Online) Though the pitches

are given in the following selection, the singer is free to utilize whatever syllables he or she chooses, as indicated by Bolcom's word "scat". This can be seen in the previous measure 46 of *Amor*, not shown below.

Another twentieth century technique utilized in Bolcom's cabaret songs is *sprechstimme*. Similar to one of the previous examples, this technique, most associated with Arnold Schoenberg, is a "half-spoken, half-sung effect". (Read, p. 66). The following excerpt from *Oh Close the Curtain* shows this technique, notated by notes with an 'x' through the stem of the note. This can be found in several of the cabaret songs.

One of the most intriguing aspects of Bolcom's cabaret songs is his cleverly hidden references to culture, both melodically and in Weinstein's lyrics. The following excerpt gives an example of this characteristic. A sly allusion to Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* happens in the song *George*. The melodic quotation is not likely to be missed by classically trained singers or even the general opera public.

The image displays two systems of a musical score in G minor (two flats). The first system, starting at measure 44, is marked *molto cantando*. The vocal line features a melodic phrase that is a direct quotation from the 'Madama Butterfly' aria. The lyrics are: "side an ap-ple pie he'd baked and stabbed him in the mid - dle of". The piano accompaniment includes a *cresc.* (crescendo) and *mf* (mezzo-forte) dynamic marking. The second system, starting at measure 48, is marked *parlando*. The vocal line continues with the lyrics: "Un bel di ve - dre - mo as he sang for this par - ti - cu - lar". The piano accompaniment includes a *p* (piano) dynamic marking and a triplet of eighth notes.

These techniques and characteristics mentioned above of Bolcom's cabaret songs are things to look for throughout all of the volumes, particularly the sixteen songs included in this thesis. Bolcom's clever melding of styles in combination with Weinstein's witty texts make the music of these songs both complex and satisfying.

CHAPTER FOUR

PERFORMANCE

Process and Preparation

When approaching a project such as this, the first step was to choose which songs to include on the program. The final performance needed to fall within forty-five to sixty minutes (in order to satisfy the standard length of a senior recital), including dialogue, so all twenty-four of the cabaret songs could not be used. In this section I will discuss my process for choosing the songs, developing the storyline, and presenting the finished product. Ultimately, sixteen songs were chosen to be placed into a general storyline for the cabaret show. The song texts with dialogue can be found in Chapter II.

In choosing which songs to include, I started with the following criteria in mind: variety, popularity, and dramatic potential. In terms of variety, there needed to be a balance of songs based on tempo, length, and volume. In addition, some selections from the *Cabaret Songs Complete* are more popular and well known, such as *Amor* from Volume I. I wanted to try to include songs like *Amor* in order to appeal to the audience. Finally, I considered songs based on their dramatic potential-whether or not they could easily be placed into a storyline I would develop later. In order to do this, I decided what I thought the mood and character was for each piece, and whether or not I could portray that song given my age and appearance. For example, I knew immediately I could not use *Surprise!* because the character of the song is specifically portrayed as a middle aged woman in an office. With these criteria in mind, I was able to choose eight songs I knew for certain I would use, twelve songs that had potential, and four songs that I eliminated.

This resulted in twenty total songs, from which I would eliminate four additional songs for a final total of sixteen

Once most of the songs were determined, the next step was to learn the music. This process was made easier because I was the only person responsible for learning music, whereas when others are involved, various skill levels and preparedness can affect the rehearsal process. My initial approach to learning the music included taking the notes and rhythms out of context to learn the melodies as written, studying the texts separately for meaning, and finally putting the music and text together, though still practicing strictly for notes, rhythms, and clarity of text. Taking the music to the next level of artistry was the second step.

At this point, I began coachings and rehearsals with my voice teacher/advisor and my pianist. In the context of this thesis, a coaching is a lesson with my voice teacher with piano on one or more of the songs with emphasis on artistic detail and style, and a rehearsal is a run through of songs with piano. Approximately six hour long coachings were needed, averaging 3-4 pieces per session, three hours of extra rehearsals with pianist only, and three full runs of the final product with pianist and teacher. In addition to heeding the advice received in the coaching sessions, my job was to make stylistic and character decisions about the music. Choosing what musical styles, types of character voices, and other stylistic effects to use were all aspects taken into account with each piece.

In addition to these music rehearsals, time was spent with my advisor discussing the intent behind each song, the script of the show, and staging ideas. The “main

character” of the show was decided to be a young woman, aged mid-twenties. The show begins with her returning from an audition trip and consists of her telling a series of stories after one too many cocktails. Approximately five or six drafts of the script were made before finalizing the dialogue, taking into account comic timing, textual flow, and overall understandability. The final dialogue can be found with lyrics in Chapter Two, and the complete score with simple staging notes can be found in the appendix

Much of my process for developing the storyline of the show included thinking about the emotional parameters for each song, various meanings or dramatic possibilities for each song, and “testing” dialogue on various people. This was perhaps the most unique and challenging aspect of my project. In order to begin creating the story, I had to consider *who* I wanted to portray. My own age and appearance played a large factor in determining this. I decided the main character would be a narrator only slightly older than myself (mid-twenties), and she would be a singing actress. At this point I began to create a story board. I divided the twenty songs into categories based on mood or subject matter. These categories included “character pieces”-songs I decided had a unique character who was narrating a story (or a part of the story), predominantly in the third person point of view. These songs included: *Song of Black Max*, *George*, *Love in the Thirties*, *Fur*, *The Actor*, *He Tipped the Waiter*, *Miracle Song*, *Poet Pal of Mine*, *Thius King of Orf*, and *Over the Piano*. The second category was a group of songs that could pertain to human relationships, predominantly in the first person point of view. These songs included: *Toothbrush Time*, *Can't Sleep*, *At the Last Lousy Moments of Love*, and *Blue*. A third category included songs I considered to be “filler”-these songs could be understood in a variety of ways based on how I decided to portray them. These songs are also in the first

person point of view and included: *Waitin*, *Places to Live*, *Satisfaction*, *Lady Luck*, *Amor*, and *Oh Close the Curtain*.

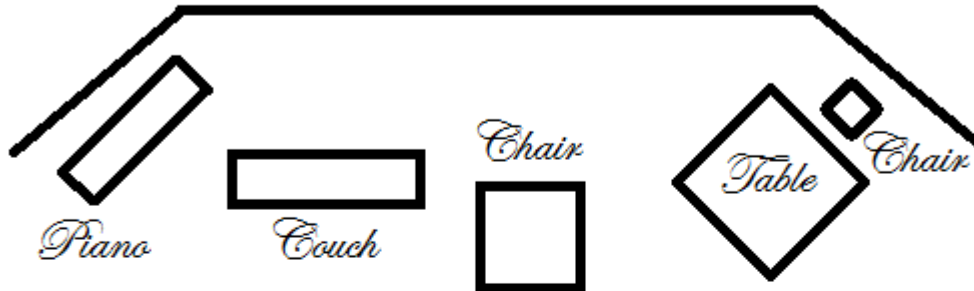
After I had determined general categories for the songs, I began to decide the order, shifting them around much like a puzzle. I determined the main idea of the story would consist of the main character telling a series of stories about her life. At this stage my main focus was finding commonalities between songs that could connect them within the plot. Such a link could be a common theme, word, or mood. For example, I placed *Toothbrush Time* and *Love in the Thirties* consecutively because they both speak of male characters. In the context of my show, the two songs are used to describe failed relationships. The majority of these songs were organized using the links listed above. If a song did not quite fit the storyline, I used a longer passage of dialogue to transition to the next song. An example of this is the dialogue preceding the song *Blue*. Once I had the main 'skeleton' for the plot, I rehearsed dialogue both for my teacher and for friends in order to gain feedback. Doing this allowed the story to develop and change in ways I did not foresee initially. This was one of the most interesting parts of my process-brainstorming and looking at songs and dialogue from various angles. A great deal of time was spent simply contemplating abstract ideas in order to create a concrete finished project.

With the music prepared and the script written, the final preparations for the show could be made. In order to create the most interesting one-woman show possible, I decided to use some set pieces and props for my performance. Certain props in particular allowed me to transition more smoothly between songs (for example, a black hat was

used before *Song of Black Max*). The setting for my show was the living room in apartment of the main character. The set pieces and props included the following items:

- One table
- Two chairs
- One couch
- Two liquor bottles, one glass, and one tray
- One telephone and one newspaper
- One suitcase containing various costume pieces and props

The stage set-up for the show was as shown in the following diagram:




Presentation

The final performance of this cabaret show, entitled *Bolcom After Dark*, will take place on March 6, 2012 at seven thirty in the evening at Bianchi's Pizzeria. The show will last approximately fifty minutes and is open to the public. The primary performers are Sara Linger, soprano and Barbara Fortenberry, piano. The official advertisement is included below.


School of Music
PRESENTS

BOLCOM AFTER DARK

featuring Sara Linger
performing the works of William Bolcom
with Barbara Fortenberry, piano



Tuesday, March 6th, 2012
Bianchis Pizzeria
7:30 pm
Admission: free



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND LETTERS

School of Music | 601.266.5543 | www.usm.edu/music
AA/EQ/ADAJ

Conclusion

Writing, directing, and producing my own one woman show was a rewarding experience. The process of learning the music, writing the script, and putting the show on stage was both challenging and exciting. I thought the final presentation was well received by the audience, which consisted of fifty to sixty people. I received many good reviews on the singing, the acting, and the overall performance of the show. In retrospect, I believe I could have spent more time developing the storyline, coaching comedic timing and musical nuance with my voice teacher, and continuing to rehearse the music with my pianist; however, I think these aspects were still well achieved given my time frame of approximately eight weeks to rehearse the production. Overall I consider this project to be quite successful, and if I were to pursue another cabaret-type show, I would likely approach the project in the same manner. With this particular project, the music was chosen first, resulting in the storyline being written to fit the music. If I were to approach another project such as this without the intent of focusing on a specific composer or set of songs, the only thing I would do differently would be to develop the story first and choose music to fit the story. Though both approaching the music before the story resulted in the successful creation of my cabaret show, I believe choosing music after composing a story line would give the performer more creative freedom.

APPENDIX: COMPLETE SCORES

ENTER THROUGH AUDIENCE, WORK
WAY AROUND UNTIL THE END OF
SONG.

Places to Live

37

Poem by Arnold Weinstein

Music by William Bolcom

Light, serene $\text{♩} = 84$

pp *una corda* *simile*
(light touches)

5 *p*
Pla - ces to live! Give me pla - ces to live! Won - ders to

10 *simile*
wan - der to, pla - ces to live! My feet are dream - ing of

15
new dust, new dirt; my hips want to swing in a cel - lo - phane

38

20

mf

skirt. Give me my change in — a cel - lu - loid note while — I

mp *cresc.* *mf*

25

buy wood - en hats from — the fac - to - ry boat.

dim. *pp*

30

pp *smooth again*

Pla - ces — to live! Give — me

35

pla - ces — to live! Won - ders — to wan - der to — pla - ces — to

40 *p detached* *sempre; very rhythmic*

live! My ton - sils — are long - ing — to hum a — new tune; I'm

p
t.c.

45 *cresc. poco a poco*

dy - ing — to dance by — the dark of — the moon With — mus - tach - i - oed

cresc. poco a poco

50

mount - ies — in deep pur - ple kilts and me in — blue vel - vet — on

55 *f*

flam - ing — red stilts.

mf *dim.* *ppp*

u.c.

40

60

pp (as before)

Pla - ces — to live! Give — me

st

(no accent) *rit.* *sim.*

65

pla - ces — to live! Give — me won - ders — to wan - der to — pla - ces — to

st

70

live! My soul is keen - ing — for new forms — of faith! I

p

st

pp

no rit.

75

need a — new God more — than Hen - ry — the Eighth to take off — my

cresc.

cresc. poco a poco

80

KNEEL FRONT AND CENTER

41

fea - thers— and give me— re - lease, and— I'll kneel in— the sand and— I'll

CROSS TO COUCH

85 *mf*

drown ————— my — va - lise. —————

pp *dim.*

molto leggero

90

Pla - ces — to live! Give — me

pp *ppp*

95

poco rit.

pla - ces — to live. —————

pordendosi

Waitin

Poem by Arnold Weinstein

Music by William Bolcom

Simply, ♩ = 60 or slower

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "Wait-in wait-in I've been wait-in wait-in wait-in all my life. — That light keeps on hid-ing from me, but it some-day just might bless my sight. — Wait-in wait-in wait-in RUMMAGE THROUGH SUITCASE, PULL OUT PHOTO ALBUM, AND BROWSE THROUGH". Performance markings include "simile" for the vocal line, "p strict time" for the piano accompaniment, and various dynamics like "mp" and "pp". The score is divided into systems with measure numbers 6, 11, and 16.

January 4, 1978 Ann Arbor

PULL BLACK HAT FROM SUITCASE

Song of Black Max (As Told by the de Kooning Boys)

Poem by Arnold Weinstein

Music by William Bolcom

March tempo, ♩ = 132, inflexible

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It consists of four systems of music. The first system (measures 1-4) shows the vocal line starting with the lyrics "He was al-ways dressed in black," and the piano accompaniment in 4/4 time with a dynamic marking of *mf*. The second system (measures 5-8) continues the vocal line with "long black jack-et, broad black hat, some-times a cape, and as" and the piano accompaniment with a dynamic marking of *p*. The third system (measures 9-12) continues with "thin, and as thin as rub-ber tape: Black Max." and the piano accompaniment with a dynamic marking of *simile*. The fourth system (measures 13-16) concludes with the vocal line "He would raise that big black hat to the big - shots" and the piano accompaniment. The score includes various musical notations such as treble and bass clefs, time signatures (4/4, 2/4), dynamic markings (*mf*, *p*, *simile*), and articulation marks like slurs and accents.

22
17

of the town who raised their hats right back, nev - er knew they were

PUT ON BLACK HAT AND CROSS RIGHT TO PIANO

20

bow - ing to Black Max. I'm talk - ing a - bout night in —

24

Rot - ter - dam when the right night peo - ple of all the town — would

27

find what they could in the night neigh - bor - hood of Black Max.

30

There were wo-men in the win-dows with bod-ies for sale —

mf

p

simile

33

— dressed in curls — like lit-tle girls — in lit-tle doll-house

mf

p

37

jails. When the wo-men walked the street with the beds up - on their

p cresc.

mf

p cresc.

40

backs, who was lift-ing up his brim — to them? Black Max!

f

f

ff

24 CROSS LEFT TO TABLE

43

dim. mf

Detailed description: This system shows the piano introduction for measures 43-45. The right hand features a complex melodic line with numerous accidentals and fingerings (5-4, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1). The left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving bass lines. Dynamics include *dim.* and *mf*.

46

And there were looks for sale, — *mf* the art of the smile, —

p

Detailed description: This system contains the vocal line and piano accompaniment for measures 46-49. The vocal line is in a treble clef with lyrics: "And there were looks for sale, — *mf* the art of the smile, —". The piano accompaniment is in a bass clef, starting with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The music is in a minor key with a complex harmonic structure.

50

on-ly cer-tain peo-ple walked that my-ste-ry mile: *mf* art-ists, char-la-tans,

cantabile mp

Detailed description: This system contains the vocal line and piano accompaniment for measures 50-53. The vocal line continues with lyrics: "on-ly cer-tain peo-ple walked that my-ste-ry mile: *mf* art-ists, char-la-tans,". The piano accompaniment features a *cantabile* marking and a *mp* dynamic. There are time signature changes from 2/4 to 4/4.

54

vau - de - vil - lians, men of ma - the - ma - tics, ac - ro - ba - tics and ci - vi - lians. There was

p mp 8th

Detailed description: This system contains the vocal line and piano accompaniment for measures 54-57. The vocal line continues with lyrics: "vau - de - vil - lians, men of ma - the - ma - tics, ac - ro - ba - tics and ci - vi - lians. There was". The piano accompaniment includes a piano (*p*) dynamic and an 8th note marking. The music concludes with a *mp* dynamic.

57 *more and more spoken*

25

knit-ting-nee-dle mu-sic from a la-dy or-gan-grind-er with all her sons be-hind her,

(mechanical)

p *simile*

60 *spoken**(freely)*

Mar-co, Vi-to, Ben-no (Was he strong! though he walked like a woman)

dim.

63

loud whisper

and Car-lo, who was five. He must be still a-live!

p *(in time)* *pp*

67 *spoken, in free time*

Ah poor Marco had the syph, and if you didn't take the terrible cure those days you went

26
71 *strict time*

craz - y and died and he did. And at the cof - fin be -

74 *half-spoken*
mf

fore they closed the lid, who raised his lid? Black Max.

cresc. *mf* *dim.*

78 *sung p*
CROSS TO CENTER TAKE OFF HAT

I was climb-ing on the train one day go-ing

pp

82
far a - way to the good old U. S. A. when I heard some mu - sic

cresc. *mp* *pp* *like a harmonica*

pp *simile*

86

un - der-neath the tracks. Stand- ing there be -

89

neath the bridge, long black jack-et, broad black hat,

SLOWLY RAISE HAT TO PUT ON HEAD

92

play-ing the har - mon - i - ca, one hand free to lift that hat to me:

96

Black Max, Black Max, Black Max.

110

TAKE HAT OFF AND PUT DOWN

Lady Luck

Poem by Arnold Weinstein

Music by William Bolcom

Bright & light, $\text{♩} = 72$

What do you like most a - bout your - self?

What do I like a - bout my - self most?

Well, I hate to boast, but I must say — I like

my luck! When - ev - er they told me Scram!

15

I'd nev - er slink out slow _____ like a hack _____ to the back

f *mp*

18

No! _____ I'd let the door slam! _____ And lo! _____ And sha -

f *ff* *mp* *p* *ff* *mp* *ff*

22

zam! _____ Friend - ship would sud - den - ly show up,

mf *ff* *f* *p* *ff*

81--1

25

like a tel - e - gram. _____

non rit.

p *mf* *dim.* *pp*

April 25, 1996 NYC

George

Poem by Arnold Weinstein

Music by William Bolcom

Fox trot ♩ = c. 120

spoken: My friend George

sung: f used to say

mf "Oh call me Geor - gia, hon,

graceful & tender 3

fz 4 *flutter* *slowly off*

spoken: Get yourself a drink,"

sung: and sang the best so -

7 pra - no in our part of town. In

fz *mf* *cresc.*

11 beads, bro-cade and pins, he sang if you hap-pened in -

p

60

14

through — the door he never locked — and said, "Get your-self a

17

drink," and sang out loud till tears fell in the

21

cogn - ac and the choc' - late milk and gin and on the

24

beads, bro - cade and pins. When stran-gers hap-pened

28 61

through his o - pen door, George said, "Stay, but you got - ta keep

31

qui - et while I sing and then a mi-nute af - ter. And call me

34 *espr., cantando* rit. ----- a tempo

Geor - gia."

espr.
dim. *p* *dim.*
sempre stacc.

38

One fine day a stran - ger in a suit of na - vy

62

41

blue took Geor - ge's life with a knife George had placed be -

44

side an ap - ple pie he'd baked and stabbed him in the mid - dle of

48

Un bel di ve - dre - mo as he sang for this par - ti - cu - lar

51

stran - ger who was in the U - ni - ted States Na - vy.

63

56 *freely*

The fu - ne - ral was at the cock - tail hour. — We knew George would like it like that.

59 *Slower and slower*

Tears fell on the beads, bro - cade and pins in the

62 *rit.* *half-whispered* *pp*

cof - fin which was white be - cause George was a vir - gin.

*let off slowly **

65 *(sung)* *almost at tempo* *poco accel.* *a tempo*

Oh call him Geor - gia, hon, get your-self a drink.

PUT ON FEATHER BOA AND COSTUME PIECES FROM SUITCASE AND IMPERSONATE GEORGE

64 **poco accel.**
69 (singer portrays George silently)

Musical score for measures 64-69. The score is in a key with two flats (B-flat major or D minor) and a 3/4 time signature. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part includes dynamic markings *mf tenderly cresc.* and *poco a poco*. The vocal line is mostly rests, indicating the singer is silent.

73 **molto rit.** **a tempo**

Musical score for measures 73-76. The piano accompaniment features a grand staff with dynamic markings *ff*, *grandioso*, and *f*. The vocal line is mostly rests.

GO SIT ON SOMEONE'S LAP

Musical score for measures 76-79. The vocal line includes the lyrics: "You can call me Geor - gia, hon -". The piano accompaniment includes dynamic markings *f*, *ffz*, *mf*, and *cresc.*

Musical score for measures 79-82. The vocal line includes the lyrics: "get your-self a drink!". The piano accompaniment includes dynamic markings *ff*, *fff*, and *ffz*. There are also triplets in the piano part.

TAKE OFF COSTUME PIECES AND CROSS TO TABLE

79

Poem by Arnold Weinstein

Miracle Song

Music by William Bolcom

Mahlerian Jazz Waltz Tempo

(♩=116)

mp

This is a mi-ra-cle

ff *una corda ** *gently at first* *p* *tre corde*

6 not the mi-ra-cle of birth

mp

10 but the mir-a-cle of

pp *cresc.* *f* *p* *u.c.* *t.c.* *8|-----*

14 death neg-lect-ing to re-mind-us

pp *f* *colla voce* *p* *espr.* *u.c.* *t.c.*

* This should give a muted, harsh sound. Also see meas. 11, 15, 65, and 68.

80

18 *a little freer* *a tempo*

the yon - der, the near - by yon - der

mp

22

So ma - ny deaths come a - cross the desk

mf *p* *mp*

26

fret and weep weep and

p

30

fret and yet for - get. *icy, dry*

mf

33

Death in the pa - per

cresc.

fz *p*

fast rolls

36

death on the phone

death a - cross a crowd - ed

cresc.

mp

poco rit.

39

clo - set death on the street ev - 'ry

pp

cresc.

a tempo

42

third friend you meet: "Hel - lo, so what else is

mf

rit.

82

45 **a little slower** **a piacere**

dead? My i - dea of a mi - ra - cle

pp *p*

49 **rit.**

is not get-ting in - to it, death O - bi - tu - a - ries

rit.

53 **a tempo primo**

lapped up with the morn - ing cof - fee

p *mp*

57 **cresc.**

Death in the ev' - ning song. Game show death! and the ques - tion

p molto legato *cresc.*

a piacere **a tempo**

62 *f* "why wuz you born?"

fz *pp* *fz* u.c.

a piacere **a tempo** **CROSS TO SIT BEHIND TABLE** **Slow**

66 We wuz born to die! Right a-gain! And ev-'ry breath a

loco *fz* t.c. u.c.

a tempo

70 pact with death, ha! A mi-ra-cle! A fact.

espr. *p* *fz* t.c.

rit. **a tempo** **RAISE NEWSPAPER IN FRONT OFR FACE** **rit.** **lunga**

73 The news of the day.

p *pp* *ppp* *lunga*

The Actor

Poem by Arnold Weinstein

Music by William Bolcom

Slow, freely

mp parlando *cresc.* *fz* *p*

A man I know _____ to keep a-live dies for a liv-ing.

f *fz* *ffz*

4 *ff*

To sur-vive! _____ to keep a - live

ffz *pp*

6 *fz* *p* *moving ahead*

dies for a liv - ing. Stands up - on a stage each night

fz *pp*

SIT IN CENTER CHAIR

Satisfaction

Poem by Arnold Weinstein

Music by William Bolcom

Fast (♩=120)

Freely

When you

look for some-thing grand and am-ple take a

bee for a sam-ple: sits a se-cond on a rose

9 **poco rit.** **Fast again**

sips a bit and goes. _____

p

11 **rit.** **Much slower** **f**

Sat - is - fac - tion af - ter

pp *espr.* *mf* *fp*

13 **Fast again** **rit.**

all, _____ can be sweet and small.

legg. *p* *pp* *mfp*

15↑ - - - - 7
8↑ - - - - 7
8↑ - - - - 7

42

Toothbrush Time

STAND CENTER, MOVING LEFT AND RIGHT
AT WILL DURING SONG

Poem by Arnold Weinstein

Music by William Bolcom

Not too slow, slightly swung ♩ = c. 90

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The piano part starts with a 4/4 time signature and a dynamic marking of *p* (piano) with the instruction "smooth". The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line and a more active treble line with triplets and chords. The vocal line enters at measure 4 with the lyrics "It's tooth-brush time, — ten a.m. a-gain and tooth-brush time... Last night — at half - past nine." The piano accompaniment continues with a *mf* (mezzo-forte) dynamic and a "lazily" marking. The score concludes at measure 10 with the lyrics "it seemed O. K. — But — in the light of day —". The piano part ends with a *mp* (mezzo-piano) dynamic. The piece concludes with a 3/2 time signature.

13

not so fine — at tooth-brush time —

pp *mp*

16

Now he's crash-ing round my bath - room — now he's read-ing my de-gree, -

fast roll *sim.*

19

pe - rus - ing all my pills — re - view-ing all my ills -

22

— and he comes out smell-ing like me. — Now — he ad-van - ces on my kit-

44

25

chen, — now he raids ev-'ry shelf

sim.

28

till — from the pots and pans and pud-dles and de - bris e - mer - ges

f² *p*

31

three eggs all for him - self. Oh, how I'd be a - head

pp *mp* *in tempo*

34

if I'd stood out of bed; I would-n't sit — here

pp

37

griev - ing, — wait - ing for the won - der - ful mo - ment of his

39

leav - ing — at tooth - brush time, — tooth - brush time, —

pp (to herself)

mfz

S.P. or S.D.

42

ten a. m. a - gain — and tooth - brush time. —

S.P. or S.D.

45

I know it's sad — to be a - lone —

mp smooth

46

47

it's so bad to be a-lone, — still I should've known.

50

that I'd be glad — to be a-lone. — I should've known, — I should've known!

52

Never should've picked up the phone

55

and called him...

SAY THESE LINES FROM TABLE USING TELEPHONE

58 spoken

Hey -- uh, listen, uhm, uh, I've got to, uh, --- oh, you gotta go too? So glad you understand.
(trying to remember his name)

61

sung: freely (but enchaind)

And ----- by the way, did you

63

rit.

say nine to - night a - gain? See you then.

HANG UP PHONE

SIT DOWN IN TABLE CHAIR

Very slow

66

short (disgusted)

Tooth-brush time!

STAND UP CENTER STAGE

Love in the Thirties*Poem by Arnold Weinstein**Music by William Bolcom*

With an easy swing, ♩ = c.100

with a triplet feeling

mp

f Dad, — *mp* can we live in the el - e - va - tor

pp *p* *mp*

f *mp*

build - ing? Kid, — with our luck — we'd live on the ground - floor...

mf *pp* *mp*

f *f*

Dad, — why aren't we com - mun - ists? Kid, —

p *f* *mf*

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14 *f* >

we can't af - ford it. Dad,

16 *p* *f* *p*

I saw the dev-il on the fi - re es - cape,

18 *fz* *p* *f*

long point - ed pus - sy ears. What kind of dev-il is

20 *f*

that, kid? — No tail, no horns.

72

22 *p sung* *f*

Crawl in - to bed with your mo - ther and me. Dad, —

25 *p* *mf*

is there a hea - ven? Hea - ven there

p simply *pp*

28 *f*

is, kid, — and it's right here. Peo - ple in hea - ven are dy - ing to

cresc. *poco f*

31 *mp*

get in - to this place! Dad, what is a death wish?

p *f*

34 *pp* (think Milton Berle) *cresc.* *f*

I hear this death wish, death wish, and I wish I was

37 *ff*

dead!

not heavy *dim.*

39 *mf* *p* **poco rit.** **Very relaxed; (♩=88)**
Tempo II

Dad, — who am I?

42 *sim.*

That's a good ques - tion, — kid,

74

44

we'll let you know, you'll see —

46

Dad, how — will I see? —

48

You'll see — "by the light of your sil - ver - y heart."

51

f I'm talk - ing sci - ence now, *p* kid. *Slow* Dad,

54 **poco rit.** **a tempo**

what is the soul? Sort of a sigh with a

pp *mp* *sempre stacc.*

57 *free, half-spoken*

wink in it, some - thing like that. Oh, what the hell...

fz

59 **Tempo primo** *mp*

— Gee, Dad, you know

as at beginning

p

62 **poco accel.**

ev' - ry - thing.

cresc.

76

64 **Fast** *f* **rit. Slow, freely**

Dad, will I al - ways find you?

f *mp*

68 **Tempo II** *p* **accel. poco a poco**

Kid, be - hind the la - bel, un - der the ta - ble you'll find me and

pp *cresc.* *mf* *p*

72 *cresc.*

I'll find you and I'm still talk - ing sci - ence,

cresc.

75 **Presto** *f* **Tempo I** *pp*

BOOP BOOP A DOO! Dad? —

f *fz* *mp*

rit. poco a poco **Tempo II**

78

Kid, now close your eyes and you will see _

81

loco

p

81

all right be - hind your sight a

83

light the size of a pop-py-seed on a Da-nish _ to go. Now let's put out that

rit.

86

Very slow

light and go to sleep.

pp

ppp sinuous, yawning

pppp

81

Can't Sleep

Poem by Arnold Weinstein

Music by William Bolcom

Like a lullaby (♩ = c.66)

The piano introduction consists of four measures in 3/4 time. The right hand plays a simple harmonic accompaniment with quarter notes and half notes. The left hand plays a similar accompaniment with quarter notes and half notes. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#).

u.c., very smooth

Measures 5-8. The vocal line begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The lyrics are: "Can't sleep dream-ing of you dream-ing of me turn-ing to". The melody features a triplet of eighth notes in the second measure and a triplet of eighth notes in the fourth measure. The piano accompaniment is marked *pp* and continues with the same harmonic pattern as the introduction.

Measures 9-12. The vocal line continues with the lyrics: "you wok-en by me." The melody features a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure. The piano accompaniment is marked *poco cresc.* in the first measure, *p* in the second measure, and *dim. poco a poco* in the third and fourth measures. The piece concludes with a *t.c., slowly* instruction.

13

Hush now, don't cry. All I was do -

pp *poco cresc.* *p*

u.c., slowly

17

rit. a tempo

ing was dream - ing.

pp

u.c.

PAN GAZE AND TRANSITION ATTITUDE FOR "AT THE LAST LOUSY MOMENTS OF LOVE"

20

rit.

poco cresc. *p* *mf espr.*

loco

8↑

7

pp

Segue

Dec. 9, 1965 Arthur
rev. Mar. 3, 1966

At the Last Lousy Moments of Love

Poem by Arnold Weinstein

Music by William Bolcom

Slow March; $\text{♩} = 76$

p

At the last lou - sy mo - ments of love _____ he want-ed to
she *

**

f

p

sempre

4

tell me the truth. At the last writh - ing rot - ten -

cresc.

7

mo - ments of love _ he want-ed to tell me the truth-- a - bout me, -

f

9

STAND UP OUT OF CHAIR

of course... Thanks, I'll need this. -

dim.

p

* can be used throughout if desired

** This chord is optional if the song follows directly from Can't Sleep.

11

At the last lous - y mo - ments of love,

p *fp* *pp*

S.P.

14

He want-ed to tell me _____ that I was-n't

cresc. *mp*

17

do - ing too well. I was eat - ing and drink - ing and

ff *mp sub.*

19

talk - ing too much. He want-ed to tell me _____ as a friend _____ at the

ff *cresc.*

106

22

end Of those last lous - y mo - ments of love.

pp cresc. *mf marc.*

(slight accents) S.P.

25

He want - ed to tell me he was leav - ing, he'd

p cresc.

27

wait - ed too long — To tell me that I was self - right - eous —

mf *p cresc.*

29

ev - en when I was - n't wrong, And I spoke a - bout friend - ship, 'till our friends gave — me

mf dim. *mp cresc.*

31

up as a friend for the sea - son, For which rea - son — he want-ed to tell me this

f *dim.*

33

truth.

mp *p* *f* *dim.*

S.P.

35

He

mp *f* *dim.*

S.P.

37

want - ed to tell me these things, as a friend, He want - ed to

p

39 tell me, but he did - n't in the end. At those

41 last lous - y mo - ments of love

rit.

43 He said it all, with his bo - dy to

Very slow, freely

cresc.

47 my best friend.

f *mp* *fz* **In tempo** *rit.*

TOAST WITH GLASS

(not rolled)

8 | --- 7

l.v.

November 3, 1995 Ann Arbor

Blue

Poem by Arnold Weinstein

Music by William Bolcom

Easily (♩=46) *p freely*

colla voce throughout

p

This is what I want to do my heart is sit real

6 *mp*

still with you. Af - ter all that cruis - ing in a - round and

10 *f* *mp*

out of town, put them down who dared re - fuse me and the

14 *p* *p*

same old line I threw ah but up up up I grew

mp dim. *p* *mf* *p*

18

and now all I want to do my heart is sit real

22

still with you. Af - ter all that screech-ing talk - ing fast and

26

slow - ing down on - ly now and then to reach you when you'd

30

let me know I knew that what I preach is none too true

114

34

that's why all I want to do my heart is sit real still with

♩=66, more rhythmic, not too fast

38

you. (Cause I do know this a-bout peo-ple and I DONT mean some:

pp *cresc.* *sim.*

41

aw-f'ly smart peo-ple are of-ten aw-ful dumb! Aren't we? We

poco a poco *f* *p*

44

just don't re-al-ize ___ that* be-hind the eyes, be-

poco accel. *cresc.*

46 **rit.** **ff** **a little slower** **p** **molto rit.** **Tempo I**

hind the mind, you find _____ the sweet-est bril-liance and a still-ness of such blue that--)

50

that's why all I want to do my soul is sit real still with you.

55 **Slower** **a tempo**

Ah so sweet - ly down the hill That is what I

59 **rit.**

want to do sweet soul is sit real still with you. _____

52

GET UP AND PUT ON COSTUME
PIECES FROM SUITCASE**Oh Close the Curtain**Poem by **Arnold Weinstein**Music by **William Bolcom****Slow Jazz Waltz Tempo**

Start "under tempo"

p *dim.*

The piano introduction is in 3/4 time, marked "Slow Jazz Waltz Tempo". It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat major). The music features a waltz-like feel with a bass line in the left hand and a more melodic line in the right hand. There are several triplet markings (3) and a dynamic marking of *p* (piano) followed by *dim.* (diminuendo).

exhausted; very smooth

TURN AROUND OVERDRAMATICALLY

5

Oh close the cur-tain — I can't stand the skies. Am

pp

The vocal line starts at measure 5. The lyrics are "Oh close the cur-tain — I can't stand the skies. Am". The piano accompaniment is in 3/4 time and features a waltz-like feel. The dynamic marking is *pp* (pianissimo).

9

I un - cer-tain or is this room full of sighs? What a

poco cresc.

simile

The vocal line starts at measure 9. The lyrics are "I un - cer-tain or is this room full of sighs? What a". The piano accompaniment is in 3/4 time and features a waltz-like feel. The dynamic marking is *poco cresc.* (poco crescendo) and the instruction *simile* (simile) is written below the piano part.

13

won - der-ful par-ty, — ne-ver heard — such lies! And

work toward tempo

17

oh I want so to be in with — these guys.

More swung, in tempo
♩ = c. 96

mf *p* *mp*

more *ad.*

21

And there is more

p

drier

25

booze — than you could re - fuse, More do-mes - tics

pp

no *ad.*

54
29

pad-ding a-round — than you could e - ver lose, — But no one could find — my

f

cresc.

f

33

mind, — my heart or my shoes. So — slip in to the

mp

fast roll

dim.

pp

37

bath - room and — blow out your — blues. —

p

41

Two

poco cresc.

4/4

3/4

45

3/4 pa - ci - fist bro - thers are hav - ing a fight. A

49

wife's get - ting loose 'cause her hus - band is tight. Hear

53

mar - ria - ges break - ing all o - ver the night. And the

cresc. poco a poco

57

host and the host - ess took flight.

mf *fast rolls* *cresc.*

56
61

f Oh don't close the cur-tain - I

65

mf must see the skies. My heart is hurt in this -

69

mp room full of sighs. What a ter-ri-ble part-y - They

73

ran out of lies. And oh I want so to be

77 **poco rit.** **As at beginning; under tempo**

gone from these guys.

pp misterioso

81 **SIT IN CENTER CHAIR**

Prince Charm-ing moves in as you crush a

poco cresc.

85 **(very tired) Main Tempo**

yawn. *half-sung* Will you make it? Will you muck it? (Oh

p pp cresc. poco

89 **Freely, a little faster**

sung *mf* rit. ----- He's gone. So I

mf pp

58
93 rit. -----

o - pen the win - dow to stare down the dawn.

97

pp Very slow

The lit - tle blue gard - ener smiles at me from

101 Slow Jazz Waltz ♩ = c. 96

the lawn.

105

Over the Piano

Poem by Arnold Weinstein

Music by William Bolcom

Swoopy, with rubato: sentimental waltz-tempo

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It begins with a piano introduction in 3/4 time, marked 'Swoopy, with rubato: sentimental waltz-tempo'. The piano part features a melodic line in the right hand and a more rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand, with dynamics ranging from *mf* to *pp*. The voice part enters at measure 4 with the lyrics 'He sang songs to her o-ver the pia - no.' The tempo is marked 'a little rushed' and the dynamics are *p* and *mp*. At measure 12, the tempo changes to 'a tempo' and the lyrics continue 'Sang long songs to her o-ver the'. The piano accompaniment includes triplets and dynamic markings like *p* and *mp*. The score concludes with a final piano flourish.

15 **with a little more movement**

pia - no. Low slow songs lust - y songs of

19 **hesitating**

love. Lov - ing songs of long lost lust just to

23 **rit.**

her just for her o - ver the

27 **a tempo**

pia - no.

f **appassionato** *f*

4
30

33

fz *accel.* *rit.* *poco accel.*

ff *deliberate* *f*

37

fz *rit.* *dim.* *p*

41

Slow a tempo

s† Un - til at last at half-past four

pp *mp*

45

Faster (like a bouncer) a tempo *più appassionato* *accel. poco*

f *mp*

Ev' - ry - bo - dy out the door! She asked him please

49 *rit.* *p*

play me one more. Which he

cresc. *f* *mf* *dim.* *p*

53 *a tempo* *poco rit.*

did and as he did Slid off the

mp *p* *mf*

57 *a tempo*

bench and said to her o-ver the pia-no Good-

p *mf* *dim.* *pp*

61 *Slow; accel.* *Fast*

bye.

pp *cresc.* *mf* *fz*

Play like the closing signature of a piano set before the union break.

16

E - ven the ice - cream man — (free ice - creams by the

pp *sim.* *p*

19

score) in - stead of shout - ing But - ter Pe - can one look

mp *cresc.*

22

at me he shout - ed A - mor A - mor —

ff *p* *pp* *ff* *f*

25

A - mor. — All o - ver town it went that way —

mp *p*

30
28

Ev'-ry - bo - dy took off the day — E - ven phi -

31

lo - so - phers 'un - der - stood — how good was the good 'cuz I

34

looked so good! The poor stopped tak - ing less —

37

the rich stopped need ing — more. — In -

40

stead of shout-ing no and yes — both look - ing at me

pp but accented

p *fz* *fz*

43

shout-ed A- mor — Da de da (scat) —

simile *fz* *fz* *fz* *sempre*

47

(Da) — (Da) —

51

(Da) — My stay in town — was cut

cresc. *mf* *f*

fz *fz* *fz* *fz*

32

55

short I was dragged to court. The

This system contains the first three measures of the piece. It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part consists of a steady eighth-note bass line in the left hand and chords in the right hand. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#).

58

judge said I dis - turbed the peace and the ju - ry gave — him what

sim. *ff* *cresc.*

This system contains measures 58 to 60. The piano accompaniment becomes more active with sixteenth-note patterns in the right hand. Dynamic markings include *sim.* (sostenuto), *ff* (fortissimo), and *cresc.* (crescendo).

61

for! The judge raised his hand

mf *ff* *dim.* *pp*

This system contains measures 61 to 64. The piano part features a dramatic dynamic shift from *ff* to *pp* (pianissimo) over a sustained chord in the right hand. The vocal line has a long note on 'hand'.

65

and in - stead of De - sist and Cease Judg - ie

graceful

This system contains measures 65 to 68. The piano accompaniment is marked *graceful* and features a flowing eighth-note melody in the right hand. The vocal line continues with the lyrics.

68

came to the stand - took my hand - and whis-pered A-mor

72

A-mor A-mor A-mor

76

Night was turn-ing in - to day - I walked a - lone - a - way -

79

Nev-er - see that - town - a-gain.

(in time)

34

83

But as I passed the church-house door in - stead of sing - ing A -

87

men the choir_ was sing - - - - - ing A - mor Da

rit. *a tempo* (almost

cresc. *fz* *p* *pp*

sim. (u.c.)

91

da (scat) A-mor

pp

95

pp (half-whispered) (almost inaudible) *ppp*

A-mor A-mor A-mor.

ppp

st.

st.

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